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RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[on the report of the Special Political Committee (A/45/825 and Corr.1)]

45/76. Questions relating to information

A

Information in service of humanity

The General Assembly,

Taking note of the comprehensive and important report of the Committee on Information, 1/

Also taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on questions relating to information, 2/

Urges that all countries, organizations of the United Nations system as a whole and all others concerned, reaffirming their commitment to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and to the principles of freedom of the press and freedom of information, as well as to those of the independence, pluralism and diversity of the media, deeply concerned by the disparities existing between developed and developing countries and the consequences of every kind arising from those disparities that affect the capability of the public, private or other media

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1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/45/21).

2/ A/45/533.

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and individuals in developing countries to disseminate information and communicate their views and their cultural and ethical values through endogenous cultural production, as well as to ensure the diversity of sources of and their free access to information, recognizing the call in this context for what in the United Nations and at various international forums has been termed "a new world information and communication order, seen as an evolving and continuous process", should:

(a) Co-operate and interact with a view to reducing existing disparities in information flows at all levels by increasing assistance for the development of communication infrastructures and capabilities in developing countries, with due regard for their needs and the priorities attached to such areas by those countries, and in order to enable them and the public, private or other media in developing countries to develop their own information and communication policies freely and independently and increase the participation of media and individuals in the communication process, and to ensure a free flow of information at all levels;

(b) Ensure for journalists the free and effective performance of their professional tasks and condemn resolutely all attacks against them;

(c) Provide support for the continuation and strengthening of practical training programmes for broadcasters and journalists from public, private and other media in developing countries;

(d) Enhance regional efforts and co-operation among developing countries, as well as co-operation between developed and developing countries, to strengthen communication capacities and to improve the media infrastructure and communication technology in the developing countries, especially in the areas of training and dissemination of information;

(e) Aim, in addition to bilateral co-operation, at providing all possible support and assistance to the developing countries and the media, public, private or other, in the developing countries, with due regard to their interests and needs in the field of information and to action already adopted within the United Nations system, including:

(i) The development of the human and technical resources that are indispensable for the improvement of information and communication systems in developing countries and support for the continuation and strengthening of practical training programmes, such as those already operating under both public and private auspices throughout the developing world;

(ii) The creation of conditions that will enable developing countries and their media, public, private or other, to have, by using their national and regional resources, the communication technology suited to their national needs, as well as the necessary programme material, especially for radio and television broadcasting;

(iii) Assistance in establishing and promoting telecommunication links at the subregional, regional and interregional levels, especially among developing countries;

(f) Provide full support for the International Programme for the Development of Communication of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 3/ which should support both public and private media.

65th plenary meeting
11 December 1990

B

United Nations public information policies and activities

The General Assembly,

Taking note of the comprehensive and important report of the Committee on Information, 1/

Also taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on questions relating to information, 2/

1. Calls upon the Secretary-General, in respect of United Nations public information policies and activities, to implement the following recommendations, in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions:

(a) The United Nations system as a whole should co-operate in a concerted manner, through its information services and the co-ordination of the Joint United Nations Information Committee, in promoting a more comprehensive and realistic image of the activities and potential of the United Nations system in all its endeavours, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, with particular emphasis on the creation of a climate of confidence, the strengthening of multilateralism and the promotion of the development activities in the United Nations system;

(b) Reaffirming the primary role of the General Assembly in elaborating, co-ordinating and harmonizing United Nations policies and activities in the field of information, the Secretary-General is requested to ensure that the activities of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat, as the focal point of the public information tasks of the United Nations, are strengthened and improved, keeping in view the purposes and principles of the Charter, the priority areas defined by the Assembly and the recommendations of the Committee on Information, so as to ensure an objective and more coherent coverage of, as well as better knowledge about, the United Nations and its work. The Secretary-General should ensure that the Department of Public Information:

3/ See United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Records of the General Conference, Twenty-first Session, vol. I, Resolutions, sect. III.4, resolution 4/21.

(i) Co-operate more regularly with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, especially at the working level, with a view to maximizing the contribution of the Department to the efforts of that organization;

(ii) Enhance its co-operation with news agencies of and in the developing countries, in particular, the News Agencies Pool of Non-Aligned Countries, the Eco-Pool of the News Agencies of Non-Aligned Countries and the Broadcasting Organization of Non-Aligned Countries, as well as with other news agencies and intergovernmental and regional organizations;

(iii) Continue to disseminate, in co-ordination with the information services of other relevant agencies, information about United Nations activities pertaining, inter alia, to:

a. International peace and security;

b. Disarmament;

c. Peace-keeping operations;

d. Decolonization and the situation in the Non-Self-Governing Territories;

e. The elimination of foreign occupation;

f. Human rights;

g. The elimination of all forms of racial discrimination;

h. The advancement of the status of women and their role in society;

i. Problems of economic and social development, as well as international economic co-operation aimed at resolving external debt problems;

j. The least developed countries;

k. The environment and development;

l. The campaign against terrorism in all its forms, bearing in mind General Assembly resolution 40/61 of 9 December 1985;

m. The international fight against drug abuse and illicit trafficking;

(iv) Do its utmost to disseminate widely and to publicize the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 4/ and the tremendous efforts of the African countries towards recovery and development, as well as the positive response by the international community to alleviate the serious economic situation prevailing in Africa;

(v) Enhance the effectiveness of its activities and the dissemination of information on United Nations activities against the policies and practices of apartheid, giving due attention to the unilateral measures and official censorship imposed on the local and international media with regard to all aspects of that issue;

(vi) Continue to disseminate information about activities of the United Nations directed at a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of international conflicts by exclusively peaceful means, as highlighted in the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization;

(vii) Continue to cover all United Nations activities pertaining to the situation in the Middle East and the question of Palestine in particular, and current developments in that region, and report thereon to the Committee on Information at its thirteenth session, in 1991;

(c) The Department of Public Information should continue its efforts in promoting an informed understanding of the work and purposes of the United Nations system among the peoples of the world and in strengthening the image of the United Nations system as a whole and, in this connection, it is recommended that the Secretary-General should ensure that the Department:

(i) Continue to maintain consistent editorial independence and accuracy in reporting all the material that it produces, taking necessary measures to ensure that its output contains adequate, objective and equitable information about issues before the Organization, reflecting divergent opinions where they occur;

(ii) Continue to apply, in the context of the review of its role, performance and methods of work, appropriate modern technologies for the collection, production, storage, dissemination and distribution of information materials, including the use of satellite facilities;

(iii) Consider expanding the programme of telephone news bulletins that are paid for by its users;

(iv) Continue its co-operation with those countries which have expressed readiness to assist the United Nations in resuming short-wave broadcasts through their respective national networks free of charge and encourage expansion of such a type of co-operation with those developed and developing countries having recognized capabilities in this field;

4/ Resolution S-13/2, annex.

(v) Take adequate measures to resume taped radio programmes, which it has temporarily curtailed, if so requested by broadcasting stations;

(vi) Continue its briefing, assistance and orientation programme for broadcasters and journalists from developing countries focused on United Nations-related issues;

(vii) Provide, on the basis of its activities, information to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization about new forms of co-operation, at the regional and subregional levels, for the training of media professionals and for the improvement of the information and communication infrastructure of developing countries;

(viii) Co-operate with educational institutions of Member States and with educators and education policy-makers, informing them about United Nations activities;

(ix) Ensure adequate daily coverage of United Nations open meetings in the two working languages of the Secretariat, reflecting the views of all delegations with accuracy and objectivity. The Department should also continue to co-operate closely with and provide assistance to members of the United Nations Correspondents Association, taking into account their needs and requirements, especially in the area of press releases, press conferences and briefings, which provide them with basic information for reporting;

(x) Use the official languages of the United Nations adequately in its written and audio-visual materials and make balanced use of the two working languages of the Secretariat;

(xi) Ensure timely distribution of its materials to subscribers and to United Nations information centres;

(d) The Department of Public Information should produce and distribute its publications in a timely manner. In particular, the Secretary-General is requested to make further efforts regarding the timely appearance of the Yearbook of the United Nations. The improvement in format and printing of the UN Chronicle is welcome. The Department is encouraged to continue to consider the interests of specific target audiences as it formulates its editorial policies;

(e) The Secretary-General is requested to expedite his consultations regarding the provision of appropriate technical and financial assistance to those States which are broadcasting or willing to broadcast to South Africa in order to enable their radio transmitters to be heard inside South Africa, as identified in his report, 5/ in fulfilment of the mandate of the General Assembly reflected in paragraph 1 of that report, and to report to the Committee on Information at its thirteenth session;

5/ A/44/698, paras. 35 and 36.

(f) The Secretary-General is urged to continue his efforts to secure a sound and stable financial basis for the publications Development Forum and Africa Recovery;

(g) It is recognized that United Nations information centres constitute an important means of disseminating information about the United Nations among the peoples of the world. In this regard, the centres should intensify direct and systematic communication exchange with local media, information and educational institutions and non-governmental organizations. The Department should arrange for periodic evaluation of the activities of the centres in this regard. It should continue to co-ordinate closely with other field offices of the United Nations system, particularly those of the United Nations Development Programme, in order to avoid duplication of work, taking into account the functional autonomy that the United Nations information centres should have. The Department should provide open and unhindered access by all people to all United Nations information centres and to all materials distributed through the centres. It is also urged to pursue the process of linking the remaining United Nations information centres that have not been linked with electronic mail;

(h) Stressing the need for co-ordinating the information activities of the United Nations system and recognizing the important role that the Joint United Nations Information Committee plays in that regard, the Department of Public Information is encouraged to continue its active participation in the work of the Committee;

(i) It is recognized that free distribution of materials is necessary in the public information activities of the United Nations. However, as demands increase and whenever it is desirable and possible, the Department of Public Information should actively encourage the sale of its materials;

(j) In view of the importance of radio programmes in developing countries, the Secretary-General is requested to enhance the efficiency of and to ensure full programme delivery by all regional radio units, namely, the African, Asian, Caribbean, European, Latin American and Middle Eastern Units and the Anti-Apartheid Programmes Section, including production of radio programmes called for by the General Assembly in resolution 38/82 B of 15 December 1983;

(k) All reports of the Secretary-General, as well as reports by representatives of the Department of Public Information, to the Committee on Information and to the General Assembly, in particular on new programmes or on the expansion of existing programmes, should contain:

(i) Detailed information on the output of the Department on each topic included in its work programme, which forms the basis of its programme budget;

(ii) The costs of the activities undertaken on each topic;

(iii) Adequate information on target audiences, end-use of the products of the Department and analysis of feedback data received by it;

(iv) A statement detailing the priority level that the Secretary-General has attached to current or future activities of the Department in documents dealing with such activities;

(v) Evaluation by the Department of the effectiveness of its different programmes and activities, with particular reference to the need constantly to review internal programme elements and activities;

2. Requests the Secretary-General to implement the recommendations relating to the activities of the Department of Public Information in accordance with the budgetary procedures as approved by the General Assembly in its resolutions 41/213 of 19 December 1986, 42/211 of 21 December 1987, 43/213 of 21 December 1988 and 44/200 B of 21 December 1989, and taking into account the priorities set by the Assembly;

3. Also requests the Secretary-General to report to the Committee on Information at its thirteenth session, in 1991, on the activities of the Department of Public Information and on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the present resolution;

4. Further requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session on the implementation of the present resolution;

5. Requests the Committee on Information to report to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session;

6. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-sixth session the item entitled "Questions relating to information".

65th plenary meeting
11 December 1990